Planting Beans – Troubleshooting

Can I use compost from my garden composter?

We would prefer you to use bought compost to keep the results of the experiment more standardised and to give the plants more nutrients, but if you really do not have access to this, please make a note on your results sheet that you used a different type of compost.

Where shall I put the bean plants at this point in the experiment?

The young plants are quite vulnerable and we recommend that you keep them indoors until they reach about 10cm. When they are moved outside, it is recommended to keep them in a sheltered area at first.

Please keep all the bean plants in the same conditions (sunlight, shelter, amount of water, distance to other flowering plants) as this could affect experiment results. Please also keep 10cm between all experimental plants (if you have space - if you don't have this much space, just make sure they are not touching).

Can I use pest-control methods?

Yes, but do make a note of it on your results sheet.

How many sprouted beans should I plant per pot?

Please plant up all 8 pots if you can. One sprouting bean per pot is the minimum - if more than 8 of your beans have sprouted, you can put more than one per pot (possibly pair up smaller ones). This will mean that you are more likely to get four good-quality plants to do the experiment on (you can take out any others that have started growing later).

There is a frost predicted – will my plants survive?

Broad beans are quite hardy before flowering, but please try to either cover your plants, or bring them inside if there is a frost likely (we are speaking to the scientists in the more Northern parts of the UK here!). Hopefully, there will be no frosts for the flowering duration of the experiment.

How often should I water?

At least twice a week (but do take into account local weather and the condition of the plants, if plants are wilting then do water them more frequently). Please ensure that you water all the plants the same amount at the same time.

How can I stop the folding pots falling over or drying out too quickly?

You may put the folding pots in larger, sturdier ones, which should help with these problems.